

S.T.A.R. Strategy for Self-Control & Strengths in Big Decisions

Lesson Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand how the S.T.A.R. strategy can help them manage emotions during group activities.
- Identify their own strengths and areas for growth.
- Practice using self-control and constructive decision-making when facing small conflicts.

Materials Needed:



- Copy of Book 4, Bennie's Brave Breakthroughs, Chapter 1, *S.T.A.R. Strategy for Self-Control & Strengths in Big Decisions*
- Pencils and markers
- S.T.A.R. Strategy Poster
- Activity 1: Identifying Strengths and Growth Areas Handout
- Activity 2: Practicing the S.T.A.R. Strategy with Role-play
- Home Connection Letter



Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children and have them sit in a circle (if applicable)
- Begin with a brief discussion on self-control and personal strengths.

Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script

1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:

- "Today, we're going to talk about self-control and how understanding our strengths can help us in difficult situations. We've already learned the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect), and today, we'll practice using it when we feel frustrated or upset."
- "Sometimes when things don't go our way, we might feel mad or disappointed, and that can make it hard to work with others. But if we know our strengths, like

being a good leader, a fast runner, or a creative problem solver, we can use those strengths while also working on areas where we need to grow."

2. Discussion Starter

- **"Can you think of a time when you felt frustrated or upset but used one of your strengths to help you stay in control?"**
(Follow-up: What strength did you use, and how did it help?)
- **"Why do you think it's important to *Stop and think* before reacting when something makes us mad or disappointed?"**
- **"How can knowing our personal strengths help us make better choices when we're in a tough situation?"**
(Optional follow-up: Can anyone give an example of a strength that might help in a conflict with a classmate?)

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Book 4, Chapter 1 aloud. Pause at key moments to engage students and make sure they are following the story.
- Ask questions during key parts of the story.

Story Time Teacher Script:

Prepare the Students for the Story:

- "Let's read Chapter 1 of Book 4, Bennie's Big Breakthroughs, where he learns how to use his strengths to improve his self-control."
- (Read the chapter aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
 - How is Bennie feeling during the game? Why?
 - What do you think Bennie's strength is?
 - Why do you think Bennie is getting frustrated?
 - How does Bennie's strength help the team?
 - How do you think Bennie could use the S.T.A.R. strategy in this situation?
 - What is Harriet's strength?
 - How do Bennie's friends try to help him?
 - Why is it important for Bennie to understand his feelings?
 - What does Grandma mean when she talks about areas for growth?
 - How do you think Bennie will handle frustration next time?

Chapter 1, S.T.A.R. Strategy for Self-Control & Strengths in Big Decisions

Bennie was known among his friends as the strong one. Whenever they played games or needed help lifting something heavy, Bennie was always ready to lend a hand. But today, Bennie was feeling frustrated. His strength wasn't helping him with something more complicated—keeping calm during group games.

It all started during recess when Bennie and his friends were playing a new game of capture the flag. Bennie was determined to win, but as the game went on, things didn't go as planned. Harriet was quick and kept sneaking past him, Buzz buzzed around in unpredictable ways, and Sammy was great at dodging the other team. Bennie, in his frustration, started getting louder and more impatient with his friends.

"Come on, guys! We're supposed to work together! You're not doing it right!" Bennie shouted as the game became more intense.

Harriet paused, noticing Bennie's growing frustration. "Bennie, we're trying, but it's just a game. We can still have fun, even if things aren't perfect."

Bennie sighed, feeling embarrassed. "I know, but I can't help it. I just want everything to go right, and when it doesn't, I get upset."

Ollie, who was always good at thinking things through, walked over to Bennie. "I think you're great at being a leader, Bennie. You're strong and know how to organize things, but sometimes it's hard to control your frustration when things don't go the way you expect."

Bennie nodded, feeling a little better but still unsure of how to manage his emotions.

Just then, Grandma, who had been watching from a bench nearby, walked over. She sat down with the group, noticing Bennie's struggle. "It sounds like you're feeling frustrated, Bennie," she said gently. "It's okay to feel that way, but it's important to learn how to manage it so you don't take it out on your friends."

"How do I do that, Grandma?" Bennie asked, genuinely curious. "I feel like I can't help getting upset when things don't go right."

"That's a great question," Grandma said. "It starts with understanding your strengths and areas where you need to grow. Everyone has strengths, and everyone has things they can work on. By becoming more aware of those, you can learn to control your emotions better."

"Like what?" Bennie asked, still feeling a little unsure.

"Well," Grandma continued, "one of your strengths is that you're strong and dependable. Your friends can always count on you to help them, and you like making sure things are organized. But one area where you can grow is learning to manage your frustration when things don't go as planned."

Bennie thought about this. "So, I'm good at leading, but I need to work on not getting upset when things aren't perfect?"

"Exactly," Grandma said with a smile. "And that's where self-awareness comes in. When you understand your strengths and areas for growth, you can handle social situations better. Let me explain it using something you've already learned about—The theory of constructed emotions."

Bennie perked up, interested. "How does that help?"

"Remember how your brain makes predictions based on what it knows?" Grandma asked. "Your brain is using concepts to understand the world and make sense of what's happening. When you get frustrated, it's because your brain is predicting that things should go a certain way, and when they don't, it makes you feel upset. But if you know that one of your areas for growth is managing frustration, you can help your brain make a new prediction."

"How do I do that?" Bennie asked, intrigued.

"By recognizing that it's okay for things not to be perfect," Grandma explained. "Instead of letting your brain predict frustration, you can remind yourself that your friends are trying their best and that it's more important to have fun together than to win every time."

Harriet jumped in, excited to share her own thoughts. "Like how I'm really fast, but sometimes I need to slow down and listen to my friends' ideas. Being fast is a strength, but I've learned I need to grow in how I work with everyone."

Betty nodded. "And I'm good at thinking through problems, but I can get stuck when things don't go exactly as planned. I've been working on staying flexible when that happens."

Bennie smiled, realizing that everyone had strengths and areas to improve. "So, everyone has something they're good at and something they need to work on?"

"That's right," Grandma said. "Understanding those strengths and areas for growth helps us with self-control, especially in social situations. For example, when you know that one of your strengths is leading, you can use that to help your friends work together. And when you know that frustration is an area where you need to grow, you can practice calming yourself when things don't go perfectly."

Ollie chimed in. "It's like training your brain to make better predictions. If you tell your brain, 'It's okay if things don't go perfectly,' it helps you stay calm and make better choices."

Bennie nodded, feeling more confident. "I get it. I'll try to remember that next time I feel frustrated. I can use my strength to help the team, and I can work on staying calm when things don't go my way."

Grandma smiled warmly. "That's the spirit. And remember, self-control isn't about being perfect—it's about knowing yourself, understanding your strengths and areas for growth, and making good choices in the moment."

As the friends gathered back together to continue their game, Bennie felt more aware of how his strengths and areas for growth affected his reactions. The next time something didn't go perfectly, he paused, took a deep breath, and reminded himself that it was okay. His brain, with its new prediction, helped him stay calm and enjoy the game with his friends.

From that day on, Bennie worked on using his strength as a leader while managing his frustration. And with a little more self-awareness, he found that he could enjoy playing with his friends, knowing that it wasn't about winning or perfection—it was about having fun and growing together.

Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- **Teacher:** "Let's talk about what Bennie learned. He realized that he is strong and can help his friends, but he also needs to work on not getting upset when things don't go perfectly. This is called self-awareness—knowing our strengths and areas where we can grow."

Post-Chapter Questions

Ask these questions to help students reflect on the chapter and connect it to their own experiences:

- Why is it important for Bennie to understand his strength as a leader?
- How can Bennie use the S.T.A.R. strategy to help with his frustration?
- Have you ever felt frustrated like Bennie when things didn't go as planned?
- What are some of your strengths that can help you in tough situations?
- How does thinking about your strengths help you make better choices?
- Why is it important to know what you need to work on?
- What did Grandma mean when she talked about the brain making predictions?
- How can Bennie remind himself to stay calm?
- What did Bennie's friends do to help him?
- How does the S.T.A.R. strategy help us solve problems with friends?

Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will identify their personal strengths and areas for growth through peer interviews and use the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect) to navigate peer conflict scenarios. Through discussion and role-play, they will strengthen their ability to apply self-awareness and decision-making in real-life situations.

Please choose from the following 2 activities:

Activity 1: Identifying Strengths and Growth Areas (15 minutes)

Introduce Activity

“Today, we’re going to focus on understanding ourselves better—what we’re great at and what we’re still learning to do better. These are called our strengths and our growth areas. We all have both!

But here’s something important to remember—just because you’re strong in something doesn’t mean you’ve reached the end. You can still keep growing and getting even better. And your challenges? Those are just strengths in progress.

To help each other discover more about ourselves, we’ll be interviewing a partner. Sometimes our classmates see strengths in us that we don’t notice ourselves!”

Activity Instructions

Pair Up Students

Randomly assign students a partner for the interview.

Distribute Interview Worksheets

Provide each student with a “Strengths and Growth Interview” worksheet (template below).

Conduct Peer Interviews (10–15 minutes)

Partners take turns interviewing each other, asking questions like:

- “What do you think you’re really good at?”
- “What’s something you’re working to improve?”
- “When do you feel proud of yourself?”
- “What do you think I’m good at?”
- “What is something I could improve at, in a helpful way?”

Self-Reflection (5–10 minutes)

After the interview, each student fills out a reflection based on what they learned from the interview and their own thoughts:

- My Strength:
- My Growth Area:
- One way I will grow my strength:
- One way I will work on my challenge:

Group Discussion

Bring students back together to share one thing they discovered or one goal they've set.

Activity 2: Practicing the S.T.A.R. Strategy with Role-play (15 minutes)**Introduce Activity**

"Now we're going to practice using the S.T.A.R. strategy. I'll give you different scenarios, and in pairs, you'll act out how to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to handle the situation."

Activity Instructions

1. Divide students into pairs.
2. Provide each pair with a scenario (examples below).
3. Ask them to Stop, Think about the problem, Act by making a choice, and Reflect on how it worked.



Example Scenarios:

1. You and your friend both want to use the same playground equipment, but there's only one swing.
2. Your group is working on a project, and someone keeps interrupting.
3. During a game, one team member keeps taking over and won't let anyone else have a turn.
4. You and your friend can't agree on what to play during recess.
5. Someone cuts in line during lunch.

After each role-play, ask pairs to share how they used the S.T.A.R. strategy to solve their small conflict.

Review and Reflection Teacher Script

1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- "Let's all come back together in a circle."

2. Closing



"Let's take a few minutes to share what we discovered.

- Who learned something surprising about their own strengths or an area for growth?
- Did anyone find that their strength helped them during the S.T.A.R. role-play?

- What was it like to use the strategy to solve a tricky situation with a partner?”

Encourage a few pairs to explain which S.T.A.R. steps were easiest or hardest and how they worked through them together.

Think silently about this question:

- ‘How did knowing your strengths help you handle the problem in your scenario?’
Now, turn to someone next to you and share one strength you’re proud of and one way the S.T.A.R. strategy helped you.”

(After pair sharing, invite volunteers to share out loud.)

Home Connection Letter

1. Sending Information Home:

- “Before you go, I have a letter for you to take home. Remember, your strengths are the tools you carry with you every day—and they can help you even in tough situations. When you stop, think, act with care, and reflect, you become more confident and more connected to others. That’s how we grow.”
- Hand out the letters as the children prepare to leave.

Parent Letter

Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Today, your child participated in a two-part activity that helped them better understand their strengths and areas for growth through a peer interview. Then, they used that self-awareness to role-play how to solve common conflicts with kindness and respect using the S.T.A.R. strategy (Stop, Think, Act, Reflect).



We practiced making thoughtful choices, using our strengths in group situations, and reflecting on how our actions affect others. You can support this at home by asking:

- “What is a strength you used today?”
- “Can you tell me about a time you used the S.T.A.R. strategy?”

We’re proud of how students are building character and confidence in their everyday choices!

Best Regards,

S.T.A.R. Strategy



**Stop
Think
Act
Reflect**



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Discovering Our Strengths

Peer Interview



Student A Interviews Student B

Then switch roles! Write neatly and respectfully. Take time to listen and think about your partner's answers.

📌 Step 1: Learning About Strengths

1. What is something you're really good at?



2. What's something you enjoy doing that helps others?



3. What's one compliment someone has given you before (teacher, friend, family)?



📌 Step 2: Noticing Areas for Growth

4. What's something that can be hard for you sometimes at school or with friends?



5. What's one thing you want to get better at this year?



📌 Step 3: What We Learned

6. Based on this conversation, what is one strength your partner has?



7. What is one thing your partner wants to work on?



🔄 Now Switch Roles and Repeat!